



MEMORANDUM

Date: February 3, 2012
To: Board of Park Commissioners
From: Susan Golub, Strategic Advisor
Subject: Park Board Operations

Requested Board Action

No Board action is requested at this time. Staff will provide the Board with information on membership, operating procedures and agenda/calendar news.

Membership Changes

Beginning with the Park Board retreat in 2010, the Board began exploring options for eliminating the requirement that six members of the Board select the seventh. Seventh member selection began in 2007 when the City Council passed Ordinance 122332, changing how Commissioners are appointed. Before the ordinance was passed, all Commissioners were nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The new appointment process had three members nominated by the Mayor and three by the City Council with the seventh member selected by the other six members. In 2007 the Park Board selected the seventh member, conducting the entire process, from candidate interviews to discussion of the merits of the candidates, in public session as required by the Washington State Open Public Meetings Act. The process proved to be very difficult and time-consuming.

The option implemented by Parks and Recreation, after review by the Park Board and approval by the Mayor and City Council, replaces the seventh member with a young adult selected through the YMCA Get Engaged Program, and adds two new members to the Board, increasing the Board from seven to nine members. Get Engaged has a well-established history of placing young adults on City Boards and Commissions, and Parks looks forward to increasing the young adult voice in Park deliberations. The Get Engaged Commissioner will serve a one-year term, beginning in September of each year.

With the expiration of the terms of two Commissioners at the end of 2011 (Terry Holme and Jackie Ramels), and the addition of two new positions on the Board, the Mayor and City Councilmember Bagshaw each have two vacant positions. Parks is pleased to welcome to the Board Mayor McGinn's appointee, Brice Maryman, and Councilmember Bagshaw's appointee, Barbara Wright. Mr. Maryman and Ms. Wright are scheduled for Parks and Neighborhoods' Committee confirmation on February 16. Two additional new members will be announced soon, with their confirmation scheduled for March 1. All four of the new members will serve three-year terms, expiring at the end of March 2015.

Operating Procedures – Meeting Frequency

Due to the struggling economy, Parks and Recreation has seen consecutive years of significant budget reductions. All areas of the department, including the Superintendent’s Office which provides staff support for the Board, have had to explore new ways of doing business in order to meet the needs of the community with smaller budgets. In response, Parks leadership team re-evaluated Board operations and determined that revising the way the Board operates could conserve staff hours, continue to effectively use volunteer time and meet the commitment to the public. The change, which will be implemented beginning in April upon approval by the City Council, will be to have Park Board meetings once a month instead of twice.

Agendas for the monthly meeting will focus on long-term planning, budget and management issues. A 2006 report by the Trust for Public Land titled “The Excellent City Park System,” provides examples of the type of issues the Board may address, such as “The Seven Measures of an Excellent City Park System.” Additionally the Board will be asked to provide guidance on the 2012 City Council Statements of Legislative Intent regarding long-term financing and arts funding. The goal is to move towards engaging the board in in-depth discussions on issues, perhaps with a panel of staff participating, moving away from the traditional staff briefing. Current members of the board will recall the November 9, 2011 discussion on Magnuson Park that included a panel discussion with staff.

Operational issues of significance to the public, such as the recent question of whether to remove the fence at the North Madison Park beach, will be addressed by the Board through the creation of an ad hoc committee to address each issue. Parks leadership is continuing to develop the format for an operational ad hoc committee – more to follow in the next few meetings on how this will function.

Calendar

As noted, two meetings a month, the regular second and fourth Thursday, will continue for February and March. Assuming City Council approval of the move to one meeting a month, the April meeting will occur on the fourth Thursday, April 26, and the May meeting on the fourth Thursday, May 24. Thereafter meetings will be on the first Thursday. Yes, this is confusing! For the long-term the second Thursday is best because it accommodates the holidays in November and December; for the short term the fourth Thursday is best because of staff and Commissioner schedules. Parks will extensively advertize the meeting dates.

2012 Park Board Meeting Dates

Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
9	8	26	24	14	12	9	13	11	8	13
23	22									

Additional Information

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